AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1   1.   (Currently amended) A method of automatically identifying and resolving one or

2   more discrepancies in an outsourced manufacturing supply chain in which ~~an~~

3   ~~enterprise and~~ a plurality of ~~its~~ supply chain partners participate, the method

4   comprising the computer-implemented steps of:

5   receiving first supply chain event information representing one or more first supply

6   chain events from **three or more supply chain partners at three or more**

7   **respective levels of a supply chain** ~~each of the supply chain partners~~ at a

8   database with which each of the supply chain partners may communicate over

9   a network;

10   periodically applying one or more rules to the first supply chain event information;

11   generating one or more alerts pertaining to one or more discrepancies that are found

12   in the supply chain event information, based on applying the rules;

13   communicating **in a substantially concurrent way** one of the alerts to ~~only~~ **the three**

14   **or more** ~~those~~ supply chain partners **at the three or more respective levels**

15   **of the supply chain** who are participating in a transaction to which the

16   discrepancies relate;

17   receiving second information that represents a second supply chain event that

18   resolves the alert; **and**

19   resolving the alert in the database based on the second information.

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1   2.   (Original) A method as recited in Claim 1, further comprising the step of periodically

2   escalating the alert to one or more pre-defined parties associated with each of the

3   supply chain partners who are participating in the transaction to which the

4   discrepancies relate, until the second information is received.

1   3.   (Original) The method as recited in Claim 2, wherein the step of periodically

2   escalating the alert comprises the steps of:

3   determining a set of one or more new unsent alerts;

4   consolidating the set of new unsent alerts by rule and by recipient;

5   sending the consolidated alerts to each recipient in a message that is organized by

6   rule.

1   4.   (Original) A method as recited in Claim 1, wherein the step of receiving first supply

2   chain event information further comprises the steps of:

3   receiving the first supply chain event information in the form of one or more

4   electronic documents that are formatted as Partner Integration Process

5   documents in a staging database;

6   validating the electronic documents according to Partner Integration Process

7   standards;

8   importing only those electronic documents that are validated successfully into an

9   alerts database that is logically separate from the staging database.

1 5.   (Original) A method as recited in Claim 1, wherein the steps of generating and

2   resolving further comprise the steps of:

3   periodically evaluating one or more existing alerts that are stored in an alerts table of

4   the database;

5   determining whether a particular existing alert is marked as resolved; and

6   removing the particular existing alert from the alerts table.

1 6 – 11. (Withdrawn)

1 12.   (Original) The method as recited in Claim 5, wherein periodically applying rules

2   comprises the steps of:

3   receiving a set of updated manufacturing resource planning (MRP) data from a first

4   supply chain partner;

5   applying a MRP Profile rule that results in generating a user interface display that

6   summarizes how the supply chain is affected by one or more changes reflected

7   in the MRP data.

1 13. – 18. (Withdrawn)

1 19.   (Currently amended) A computer-readable medium carrying one or more sequences

2   of instructions for automatically identifying and resolving one or more discrepancies

3   in an outsourced manufacturing supply chain in which an enterprise and a plurality of

4   i̶t̶s̶ supply chain partners participate, which instructions, when executed by one or

5   more processors, cause the one or more processors to carry out the steps of:

6   receiving first supply chain event information representing one or more first supply

7   chain events **associated with three or more** f̶r̶o̶m̶ e̶a̶c̶h̶ o̶f̶ t̶h̶e̶ supply chain

8   partners at **three or more respective levels of a supply chain, wherein**

9   **receiving the first supply chain event information includes receiving the**

10   **first supply chain information at** a database with which each of the supply

11   chain partners may communicate over a network;

12   periodically applying one or more rules to the first supply chain event information;

13   generating one or more alerts pertaining to one or more discrepancies that are found

14   in the supply chain event information, based on applying the rules;

15   communicating **in a substantially concurrent way** one of the alerts to o̶n̶l̶y̶ **the three**

16   **or more** t̶h̶o̶s̶e̶ supply chain partners **at three or more respective levels of**

17   **the supply chain** who are participating in a transaction to which the

18   discrepancies relate;

19   receiving second information that represents a second supply chain event that

20   resolves the alert; **and**

21   resolving the alert in the database based on the second information.

1   20.   (Currently amended) An apparatus for automatically identifying and resolving one or

2   more discrepancies in an outsourced manufacturing supply chain in which a̶n̶

3   e̶n̶t̶e̶r̶p̶r̶i̶s̶e̶ a̶n̶d̶ a plurality of i̶t̶s̶ supply chain partners participate, comprising:

4   means for receiving first supply chain event information representing one or more

5   first supply chain events from each of **at least three** ~~the~~ supply chain partners

6   **at at least three respective levels of a supply chain** at a database with which

7   each of the supply chain partners may communicate over a network;

8   means for periodically applying one or more rules to the first supply chain event

9   information;

10   means for generating one or more alerts pertaining to one or more discrepancies that

11   are found in the supply chain event information, based on applying the rules;

12   means for communicating **in a substantially concurrent way** one of the alerts to

13   ~~only~~ **at least three of the** ~~those~~ supply chain partners **at three or more**

14   **respective levels of the supply chain** who are participating in a transaction to

15   which the discrepancies relate;

16   means for receiving second information that represents a second supply chain event

17   that resolves the alert; **and**

18   means for resolving the alert in the database based on the second information.

1   21.   (Currently amended) An apparatus for automatically identifying and resolving one or

2   more discrepancies in an outsourced manufacturing supply chain in which ~~an~~

3   ~~enterprise and~~ a plurality of ~~its~~ supply chain partners participate, comprising:

4   a network interface that is coupled to the data network for receiving one or more

5   packet flows therefrom;

6   a processor;

7   one or more stored sequences of instructions which, when executed by the processor,

8   cause the processor to carry out the steps of:

9   receiving first supply chain event information representing one or more first

10   supply chain events from each of the **three or more** supply chain

11   partners **at three or more respective levels of a supply chain,**

12   **wherein receiving the first supply chain event information includes**

13   **receiving the first supply chain information** at a database with

14   which each of the supply chain partners may communicate over a

15   network;

16   periodically applying one or more rules to the first supply chain event

17   information;

18   generating one or more alerts pertaining to one or more discrepancies that are

19   found in the supply chain event information, based on applying the

20   rules;

21   communicating **in a substantially concurrent way** one of the alerts to ~~only~~

22   **the three or more** ~~those~~ supply chain partners **at three or more**

23   **respective levels of the supply chain** who are participating in a

24   transaction to which the discrepancies relate;

25   receiving second information that represents a second supply chain event that

26   resolves the alert; **and**

27   resolving the alert in the database based on the second information.

1 22. (Currently amended) An apparatus for automatically identifying and resolving one or

2 more discrepancies in an outsourced manufacturing supply chain in which ~~an~~

3 ~~enterprise and~~ a plurality of ~~its~~ supply chain partners participate, comprising:

4 a network interface that is coupled to the data network for receiving one or more

5 packet flows therefrom;

6 an alerts subsystem that is communicatively coupled to a database table that includes

7 first supply chain event information representing one or more first supply

8 chain events from **three or more** ~~each of the~~ supply chain partners **at three or**

9 **more respective levels of a supply chain**;

10 rule logic that is communicatively coupled to the alerts subsystem and that is

11 configured to periodically apply one or more rules to the first supply chain

12 event information and generate one or more alerts pertaining to one or more

13 discrepancies that are found in the supply chain event information, based on

14 applying the rules; and

15 alert delivery logic that is communicatively coupled to the alerts subsystem and that

16 is configured to communicate **in a substantially concurrent way** one of the

17 alerts to ~~only~~ **the three or more** ~~those~~ supply chain partners **at the three or**

18 **more respective levels of the supply chain** who are participating in a

19 transaction to which the discrepancies relate.

1 23. (Original) An apparatus as recited in Claim 22, wherein the rule logic further is

2 configured to receive second information that represents a second supply chain event

3   that resolves the alert and to resolve resolving the alert in the database table based on

4   the second information.

1 24.   (Original) An apparatus as recited in Claim 23, further comprising alert escalation

2   logic that is configured to periodically escalate the alert to one or more pre-defined

3   parties associated with each of the supply chain partners who are participating in the

4   transaction to which the discrepancies relate, until the second information is received.

1 25.   (Original) An apparatus as recited in Claim 24, further comprising an administrative

2   subsystem configured to enable an administrative user to create and store one or more

3   values that define the pre-defined parties and one or more other characteristics of the

4   supply chain partners.

1 26.   (Original) An apparatus as recited in Claim 22, further comprising user interface

2   generating logic that is configured to generate one or more user interface pages for

3   delivery to a logically separate display station, wherein one of the user interface pages

4   comprises a summary view of one of the alerts, and includes one or more links to

5   detailed views of information related to the one of the alerts that is shown in the

6   summary view.

1 27.   (Original) An apparatus as recited in Claim 22, further comprising user interface

2   generating logic that is configured to generate one or more user interface pages for

3   delivery to a logically separate display station, wherein one of the user interface pages

4   comprises a summary view of one of the alerts, and includes one or more links to

5   detailed views of information related to the one of the alerts that is shown in the

6   summary view, wherein the links are selected from among a plurality of links relating

7   to all alerts and include only links that specifically pertain to the one of the alerts that

8   is shown in the summary view.

1   28.   (New) The method of claim 1, wherein the supply chain partners include a set of

2   supply chain partners with no direct contractual relationship with others of the supply

3   chain partners.

1   29.   (New) The method of claim 1, wherein the supply chain partners include a set of

2   supply chain partners with no direct transactional relationship with others of the

3   supply chain partners.